

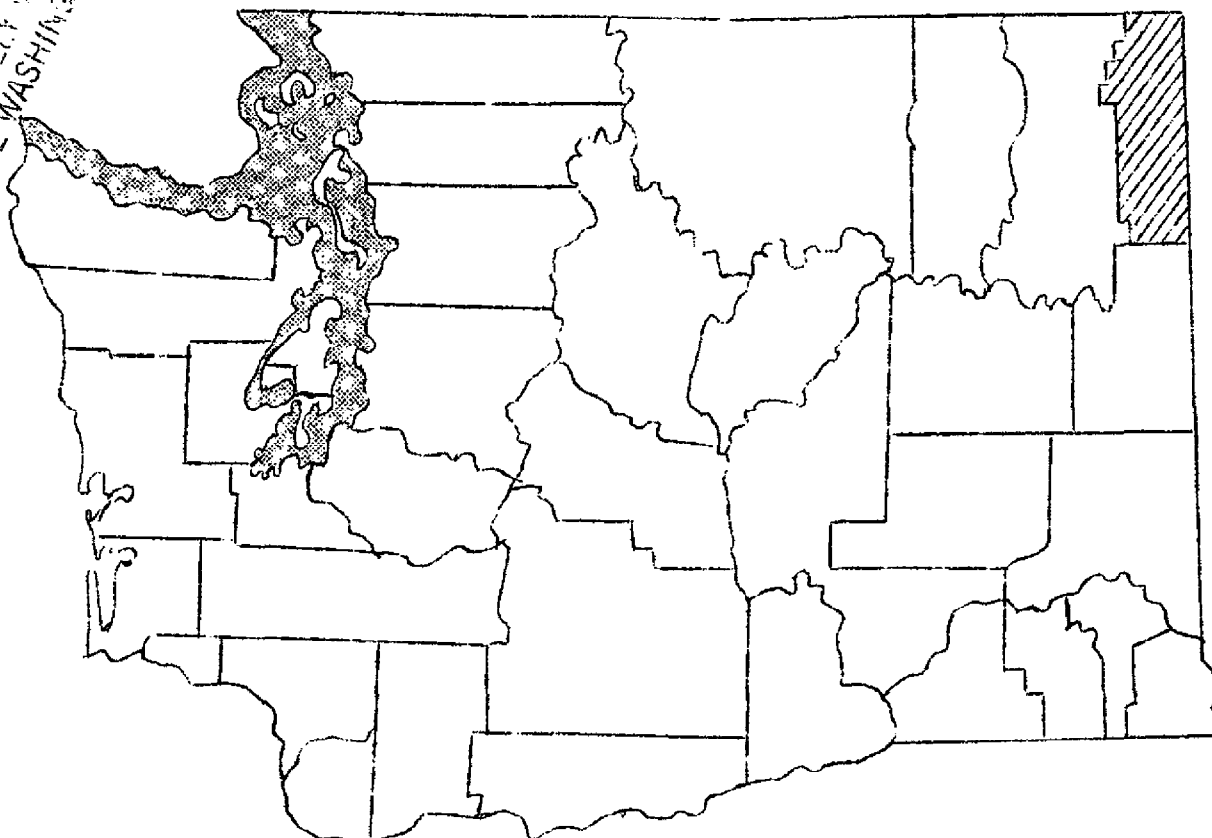
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PEND OREILLE COUNTY AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON

COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DATA SERIES
1965

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WASHINGTON CROP AND LIVESTOCK REPORTING SERVICE
348 Federal Office Building
Seattle, Washington 98104

FOREWORD

This bulletin on Pend Oreille County is one of a second edition series devoted to presenting the history and present nature of agriculture in each of the thirty-nine counties of the State of Washington. The original series was initiated in 1956 by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. State funds were matched by moneys from the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

County agricultural data books are intended to serve a variety of needs. Continually changing conditions in a dynamic state such as Washington require constant planning by groups and individuals, especially in the field of marketing agricultural products. Knowledge of land resources, population and agricultural-economic trends in a local area such as Pend Oreille County is of great value. This book will be useful for reference in public and private instruction by social studies teachers. It has been devised also to inform adults interested in knowing more about their immediate area.

Selected geographic facts, agricultural history, population trends and statistical data are included to give an overall appreciation of Pend Oreille County. Enumerations of the United States Censuses of Population and Agriculture are summarized to give a perspective of development since the establishment of Pend Oreille County. Facts on topography, soil, climate and forest which influence farming are integrated from surveys and reports of government agencies. Estimates of leading crops by years since 1939 by the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service provide a measure of the trend in the agriculture of the county farm industry.

Acknowledgment is accorded the professional work of several persons. Immediate direction was under Emery C. Wilcox, Agricultural Statistician in Charge, Field Operations Division, Statistical Reporting Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Research involved in up-dating and revising the original information and the preparation of the manuscript of the second edition of the Pend Oreille County bulletin were performed by George K. Saito, Research Analyst, Washington State Department of Agriculture. Editing of the first draft of the present bulletin was done by Emery C. Wilcox. Agricultural Statisticians of the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service gave valuable assistance. Margaret B. Quiroga, Washington State Department of Agriculture, typed all of the textual and tabular material and prepared the graphs. The bulletins were reproduced and assembled by members of the clerical staff of the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

Olympia, Washington
May 1, 1965

Cameron Adams, Acting Director
Washington State Department of Agriculture

Funds for this bulletin provided by the Washington State Department of Agriculture were matched by the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

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PART I

HISTORY OF PEND OREILLE COUNTY

Introduction

Pend Oreille County is situated in the northeastern corner of the state of Washington. It is the area where the Pend Oreille River separates the Okanogan Highlands from the Selkirk Range. The county supports an expanding agricultural economy based primarily on livestock, forest products and feed crops.

Pend Oreille's area of 1,428 square miles (approximately 913,920 acres) makes it twenty-fifth in size among the 39 Washington counties. The county is roughly rectangular and is about 65 miles north to south and 17 to 27 miles east to west.

According to the 1959 Census of Agriculture, nearly 14 percent of the county land area was in farms and around 2 percent or 16,317 acres was in harvested cropland. Over 80 percent of the county is in forests. Some of the forested areas serve as pasture.

Topography and climate restrict the number and acreage of crops and the county is best suited to livestock and livestock products as far as agriculture is concerned. Crops, however, when added to the livestock industry, make agriculture a major segment of the total economic resource base of Pend Oreille County. Since the early nineteenth century, people of varied origins and nationalities have settled in the county and have developed the agricultural enterprise. The economic history has been characterized by a steady growth of agriculture along with employment in mining, the forest products industry and service trades.

History 1/

The first white men to explore the Pend Oreille Valley were British fur traders attached to the Northwest and Hudson Bay Fur Companies. Among the early Englishmen in the area was David Thompson who explored the valley in 1809. The Pend Oreille River became an early route used by fur traders to travel between Pend Oreille Lake and the Columbia River. The Kalispel Indians who inhabited the region traded with the French-Canadian trappers of the upper Columbia River Basin.

Two Catholic missionary priests, Father De Smet and Father Hoecken, built St. Ignatius Mission near Usk on the present Kalispel Indian Reservation in 1844. These missionaries introduced the rudiments of gardening and livestock husbandry

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to the Pend Oreille Valley. Interest in agriculture also was stimulated by missionary activity at Tskimakian Mission by Elkhana Walker near present Springdale in Stevens County and by the Hudson Bay Company at Fort Colville. David Douglas and Angus McDonald of the Hudson Bay Company introduced cattle into the Colville Valley. The Kalispel Indians raised horses of the Cayuse type which had a good market throughout the Inland Empire during the fur trading and early prospecting period.

White settlement in the Pend Oreille Valley was discouraged between 1840 and 1870 because of general Indian hostility in northeastern Washington. Mineral resources, however, attracted the first wave of permanent settlers into the area during this period. Prospectors and miners moved into the Pend Oreille River drainage area for gold and silver. Lead and zinc also were discovered in northern Pend Oreille County but it was not feasible to mine until roads and railroads were built into the area. By 1878, a small scale lead and zinc mining operation was started at Metaline Falls. Transient laborers and some permanent settlers were brought into the area by the Mammoth and Morning Company, Pend Oreille Mines and Metal Company and Metaline Mines and Metal Company--three pioneer mining companies in the Pend Oreille Valley. Since 1880, Pend Oreille County has been the state's leading lead and zinc mining region and has ranked second to Chelan County in value of mineral production.

Mining in the area received added impetus with the coming of the railroads. The Great Northern and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul built railroads in the area. The completion of a branch line by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway to the mineral areas of the county did much to cause the lumber boom after 1910. Lumbering became an important industry at Newport, Usk, Cusick and Ione. An important cement industry also developed in the region after 1911. The Lehigh Portland Cement Company, located at Metaline Falls, became one of the state's leading cement manufacturing operations. This company supplied cement for the construction of Grand Coulee Dam and other projects in eastern Washington during the 1930's and 1940's.

Any appreciable agricultural settlement in the Pend Oreille Valley did not take place until after 1892 when the Great Northern Railway reached Newport.

1/ This historical summary has been derived from six sources:

- (1) Ernestine A. Hamburg. Geography of Pend Oreille County, Washington. Thesis, Master of Arts, geography, University of Washington, 1943. 72 pages, illustrated. Library, University of Washington, Seattle.
- (2) Ruby L. Dingee. Newport Miner, 1930. Historical Sketches of Pend Oreille County, Washington. Newport, Washington.
- (3) Richard M. Perry, The Counties of Washington. Secretary of State of Washington, Olympia, 1943. See section on Pend Oreille County.
- (4) Washington State Historical Society and Writers' Program of the Works Progress Administration. Washington, A Guide to the Evergreen State. Revised Edition, 1950. Pages 428-432.
- (5) Washington Association of County Commissioners and Engineers. Book of the Counties, 1953. Washington State College, Pullman. pp. 44-47.
- (6) "Pend Oreille County's Temporary County Agent". The Washington Farmer, Spokane, Washington, May 3, 1956, p. 5. A description of County Agent Erle Hupp's work in Pend Oreille County from 1919 to 1955.

Earlier, Indian hostility, lack of good roads, remoteness from markets and the problem of clearing forest lands discouraged farm settlements. Before the 1890's, a few cattlemen used the grazing lands of the Pend Oreille Valley and of Deer Valley south of Newport. Early settlers such as Jim Davies, Albeni Poirier and Joe Cusick drove cattle to Rathdrum in Idaho and to Spokane. During the 1890's and early 1900's, the Great Northern brought new homesteaders and land seekers to Cusick Flats and into the Calispell Lake district. One of the earliest products from the Cusick Flats district was wild grass hay. Oats also were an important pioneer crop in the heavy soils of the old lake bed now called the Calispell Valley.

Dairying began around 1891. Milk, butter and cream were sold locally to lumber and mining camps or were assembled at Usk and Newport for shipment via the Great Northern Railway. Cusick and Usk developed into important dairy areas. The Calispell Creamery Company was organized at Usk by W. C. Cusick, a pioneer dairyman. By 1900, there were about 400 head of milk cows belonging to members of the Calispell Dairyman's Cooperative and it was manufacturing over 26,000 pounds of butter annually and distributing milk to lumber and mining towns throughout the area.

On March 1, 1911, Pend Oreille County was created from the eastern part of older Stevens County by the Washington State Legislature making it the last county to be formed in the state. The name of the county was derived from the major river of the area--Pend Oreille. The name, of French Canadian origin, was used by early French fur trappers to describe the Kalispel Indians who wore pendants of shell on their ears.

The 1920 Census of Agriculture showed that the pioneer farmers of Pend Oreille County had made considerable progress in a period of thirty years. Enumerators visiting 586 farms in the county found that farmers had 120,000 acres of land and had improved 43,000 acres. There were 2,300 dairy cattle, 1,300 beef cattle, 1,350 horses and mules, 570 sheep and 680 head of hogs on farms. Main products being sold or used on the farm during that year were milk, cream and butter, chickens and eggs and livestock. Crops sold from farms in the county in 1920 were valued at \$104,000. Hay and feed grains worth \$246,000 and commercial wheat and cash grains valued at \$52,000 were harvested from Pend Oreille County farms that season.

During the 1930's, Pend Oreille County's agriculture, lumbering and mining went through a period of retrenchment and there was little or no expansion in population. Dairying and general farming met with economic difficulties. Lumber mills and mines were forced to close down. In 1936, the Resettlement Administration of the Federal Government bought 126,000 acres of land in the county which was determined to be agriculturally submarginal and where the settlers were willing to move elsewhere. This land was added to the existing Kaniksu National Forest.

In the early 1940's, the economy of Pend Oreille County began to recover from the depression years. The cement industry at Metaline Falls was active in supplying construction materials for the building of Grand Coulee Dam and other government projects. Wartime needs for strategic minerals such as zinc and lead mined in the Metaline Falls area and for logs and lumber from the reserves of Kaniksu National Forest brought increased employment. Although there was considerable migration of people from the area to the industrial centers of the state

during the 1940's, there was an increase in the county population of about 300. Many persons residing in the county were employed in the construction of the U. S. Naval Training Station at Farragut on Lake Pend Oreille across the Idaho line.

After 1950, Pend Oreille County's agricultural production increased steadily and became more specialized. Higher prices for grains, beef cattle, dairy and poultry products stimulated production. A growing market in the greater Spokane region became a strong incentive for the county's dairy and poultry production. The value of all farm products sold from Pend Oreille County farms increased greatly from 1949 when it was worth \$990,359 to \$1,043,708 in 1954 and to \$1,487,489 in 1959.

Many private and public organizations have contributed guidance and leadership in the progress of Pend Oreille agriculture. These include such groups as the early Calispell Creamery Cooperative, the county chapter of the Washington Dairymen's Association (later the Dairy Federation), the Inland Empire Dairymen's Association, the Pend Oreille Milk Producer's Association, the Pend Oreille Dairy Herd Improvement Association and the county chapter of the Washington Cattlemen's Association. Public agencies which have assisted agricultural development in the county are the Agricultural Extension Service through its county agents stationed at Newport and fieldmen of the United States Soil Conservation Service in the Pend Oreille district.